POLICY \_\_\_\_

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 719

PRIOR LAKE - SAVAGE AREA SCHOOLS

**\_\_\_\_ EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

**I. PURPOSE**

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools recognizes the value of technology tools to enhance student learning experiences and the increasing role of social media in our learning environments. The District also recognizes its obligation to teach and ensure responsible and safe use of these technologies.

The purpose of this policy is to address the use of social media in the classroom, to provide guidance to employees on the maintenance of professional ethics and boundaries when utilizing social media in their personal and professional lives and to provide Student Code of Ethics guidelines.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

**Public online social media** are defined to include: Websites, Web logs (blogs), wikis, social networks, online forums, virtual worlds, and any other interactive social media generally available to the public on the Internet (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, blog sites, etc.).

**District-approved, password-protected online social media** are interactive media within the District’s electronic technologies network or which the District has approved for educational use (e.g., authenticated interactive portions of MOODLE). The District has greater authority and responsibility to protect minors from inappropriate content and can limit public access within this forum.

**III. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

1. This policy addresses employees’ use of publicly available social media networks. The District takes no position on employees’ decision to participate in the use of social media networks for personal use on personal time. However, use of these media for personal use during District time or on District equipment is prohibited. In addition, employees must avoid posting any information or engaging in communications that violate state or federal laws or District policies.

The District provides password-protected social media tools and District-approved technologies for e-learning and encourages use of District tools for collaboration by employees. However, public social media networks, outside of those sponsored by the District, may not be used for classroom instruction or school-sponsored activities without the prior authorization of the Superintendent, or designee, and parental consent for student participation on social networks. The District may use these tools and other communication technologies in fulfilling its responsibility for effectively communicating with the general public.

1. The line between professional and personal relationships is blurred within a social media context. When employees choose to join or engage with District students, families or fellow employees in a social media context that exists outside those approved by the District, they are advised to maintain their professionalism as District employees and have responsibility for addressing inappropriate behavior or activity on these networks, including requirements for mandated reporting.

All employees are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for our schools and to remember they are role models to students in this community. Because readers of social media networks may view the employee as a representative of the schools and the District, the District requires employees to observe the following rules when referring to the District, its schools, students, programs, activities, employees, volunteers and communities on

any social media networks:

1. An employee’s use of any social media network and an employee’s postings, displays, or communications on any social media network must comply with all state and federal laws and any applicable District policies.
2. Employees must be respectful and professional in all communications (by word, image or other means).
3. Employees shall not use obscene, profane or vulgar language on any social media network or engage in communications or conduct that is harassing, threatening, bullying, libelous, or defamatory or that discusses or encourages any illegal activity or the inappropriate use of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, sexual behavior, sexual harassment, or bullying.
4. Employees should not use their District e-mail address for communications on public social media networks that have not been approved by the District.
5. Employees must make clear that any views expressed are the employee’s alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the District.
6. Employees may not act as a spokesperson for the District or post comments as a

representative of the District, except as authorized by the Superintendent or the

Superintendent’s designee. When authorized as a spokesperson for the District,

employees must disclose their employment relationship with the District.

1. Employees may not disclose information on any social media network that is confidential or proprietary to the District, its students, or employees or that is protected by data privacy laws.
2. Employees may not use or post the District logo (defined as the leaf seedling) on any social media network without permission from the Superintendent, or designee.
3. Employees may not post images on any social media network of co-workers without

the co-workers’ consent.

1. Employees may not post images of students on any social media network without

written parental consent, except for images of students taken in the public arena, such

as at sporting events or fine arts public performances.

1. Employees may not post any non-public images of the District premises and property,

including floor plans.

1. Exercise caution when choosing to be “friends” with students of Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools or their parents on your personal online social media site. Educational employees have a responsibility to maintain appropriate employee-student relationships, whether on or off duty. In general, if your connection is due to your role as an employee of the district (rather than as a relative or family friend) it is recommended that you maintain a professional relationship and decline the online “friendship” on your personal site.

If you are uncertain of the language to use when declining the “friend” request of a student or parent, consider the following suggestion for a response:

*Thank you for your friend request. I have a routine practice of only sharing information with students or parents through my professional email and web resources. If you feel your request is directly related to my professional responsibilities, feel free to use my school email or professional web resources to contact me.*

1. The District recognizes that student groups or members of the public may create social media representing students or groups within the District. When employees, including

coaches/advisors, choose to join or engage with these social networking groups, they do so as an employee of the District.

Employees have responsibility for maintaining appropriate employee-student relationships at all times and have responsibility for addressing inappropriate behavior or activity on these networks. This includes acting to protect the safety of minors online. Employees shall annually disclose to the District the existence of and their participation in such networks.

1. Employees who participate in social media networks may decide to include information

about their work with the District as part of their personal profile, as it would relate to a

typical social conversation. This may include:

1. Work information included in a personal profile, to include District name, job title, and

job duties.

2. Status updates regarding an employee’s own job promotion.

3. Personal participation in District -sponsored events, including volunteer activities.

1. An employee who is responsible for a social media network posting that fails to comply with the rules and guidelines set forth in this policy may be subject to discipline, up to and

including termination. Employees will be held responsible for the disclosure, whether

purposeful or inadvertent, of confidential or private information, information that violates the

privacy rights or other rights of a third party, or the content of anything posted on any social

media network.

1. Anything posted on an employee’s Web site or Web log or other Internet content for which

the employee is responsible will be subject to all District policies, rules, regulations, and

guidelines. The District is free to view and monitor an employee’s Web site or Web log at

any time without consent or previous approval. Where applicable, employees may be asked to disclose to the District the existence of and to provide the District with access to an employee’s Web site or Web log or other personal social media net work as part of an

employment selection, promotion, or disciplinary process.

1. Use of District-approved, online social media in the classroom is subject to the following:

1.Teachers shall instruct students on the appropriate use of such sites. A signed *Student*

*Internet Use* Agreement must be on file for each student using online social media in the

classroom.

2. Teachers must ensure that private student data and work is not made public on public

online social media sites unless permission for publication of student work or data on the

Internet is obtained.

3. When using online social media in the classroom, teachers shall ensure compliance with

any applicable terms of use.

School Board Adoption:

An Equal Opportunity School District

**Student Code of Ethics Using Social Media**

1. Students accessing or using Weblogs, Wikis and Podcasts per student assignment are required to keep personal information out of their postings. Students will not post or give out photographs of themselves or others, their family name, password, user name, email address, home address, school name, city, country or other information that could help someone locate or contact them in person.
2. Students using Moodle will not share their user name or password with anyone other than their teachers and parents.
3. Students will not log in as another classmate.
4. Students using Weblogs, Wikis, Podcasts or Moodle will treat these tools as a classroom space. Speech that is inappropriate for class is not appropriate on Weblogs, Wikis, Podcasts or Moodle. Students are expected to treat others and their ideas online with respect.
5. Assignments on Weblogs, Wikis, Podcasts or Moodle are like any other assignment in school. Students, in the course of completing the assignment, are expected to abide by policies and procedures in the Student/Parent Handbook, including those policies regarding plagiarism and acceptable use of technology.
6. Student Blogs are to be a forum for student expression. However, they are first and foremost a tool for learning.
7. Students shall not use the Internet, in connection with the teacher assignments, to harass, discriminate or threaten the safety of others. If students receive a comment on a Blog or other Web 2.0 tool used in school that makes them feel uncomfortable or is not respectful, they must report this to a teacher, and must not respond to the comment.
8. Students accessing Blogs, Wikis, or Podcasts from school using school equipment shall not download or install any software without permission, and not click on ads or competitions.
9. Students should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, interpreting and expressing information for the benefit of others. Always identify sources and test the accuracy of information from all sources.
10. Students will treat information, sources, subjects, colleagues and information consumers as human beings deserving of respect. Gathering and expressing information should never cause harm or threaten to be harmful to any person or group of people.
11. Students are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and to each other. Admit mistakes and correct them promptly. Expose unethical information and practices of others.
12. Failure to follow this Code of Ethics will result in academic sanctions and/or disciplinary action.